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ABSTRACT

This paper describes the various approaches taken by six states that have accepted the challenge of establishing goals consistent with other goals and standards established by the state for students participating in alternate assessments and that have created links with the state-adopted curriculum frameworks. The purpose of a curriculum framework is to provide a foundation for teachers to use as a basis for planning instructional programs for students with moderate/severe disabilities. This paper is designed to provide state teams with options for committee purposes, committee representatives, processes for development and next steps, as well as a guide that will help create a foundation for state planning. It begins by discussing the make-up of each state's committee and the development of consistent goals and objectives. Next, efforts of the 6 states (Colorado, Kentucky, Missouri, New Jersey, New York, and West Virginia) included in the review are profiled. Results of the review indicate participants have gone through personal changes because of their work on Curriculum Framework committees, including a renewed sense of professional pride, an increased awareness of vocation, and an increased appreciation for the dedication and commitment to the success of all students. (CR)

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What Gets Tested, Gets Taught
Who Gets Tested, Gets Taught:

Curriculum Framework Development Process

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Sarah Kennedy

August 1998

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What Gets Tested, Gets Taught
Who Gets Tested, Gets Taught

Curriculum Framework Development Process

Patricia Burgess
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The State has establish goals for the performance of children with disabilities in the State that ... are consistent, to the maximum extent appropriate, with other goals and standards for children established by the State (IDEA 1997, Section 612)

Many states are facing the challenge of establishing goals that are consistent with other goals and standards established by the state for students participating in alternate assessment. This paper describes various approaches taken by some states that have accepted the challenge of creating links with the state adopted curriculum frameworks. The purpose of a curriculum framework, for the intent of this paper, is to provide a foundation for teachers to use as a basis for planning instructional programs for students with moderate/severe disabilities. The aim of this paper is to provide state teams with options for committee purposes, committee representatives, processes for development, and next steps, as well as, a guide that will help create a foundation for your state's planning.

Who was involved and what was the scope of work?

Although states are blazing uncharted territory when developing consistent goals and standards, all six states showcased in this document began the process by establishing solid philosophical principles and a clear understanding of the curriculum framework committee's purpose. One of these guiding principles that was consistent for each state's work was that students with moderate/severe disabilities must by given the opportunity to access the goals and standards for children established by the State. This guiding principle became the cornerstone for the committee's work and products.

Each state's committee included general and special educators, school administrators, and state staff who possess knowledge, skills, and experiences to identify important standards and performance indicators. Most of the states included parents of students with moderate/severe disabilities and representatives from Institutions of Higher Education. New Jersey, New York and West Virginia convened specific curriculum committees; other states used an existing Alternate Assessment Core/Steering Committee that was, also, charged with creating the alternate assessment. New York started with a large Advisory Committee and then convened curriculum committees for each of the content areas. The New Jersey and West Virginia core committees consisted of representatives from the State Departments of assessment, curriculum and instruction, and special education.. - Table 1 shows the states and the persons represented on the State Framework Committees.

Table 1

Composition of the Framework Committee Representation

	CO	KY	MO	NJ	NY	WV
Special Educators	x	x	x	x	x	x
General Educators	x	x	x	x	x	x
Parents	x		x	x	x	x
Building/District Administrators	x	x	x	x	x	x
Higher Education		x				x
State Department	x		x	x	x	x
Training and Resource Centers					x	x
Private Schools				x	x	

How were consistent goals and objectives developed?

Most states focused the process of development on a set of guiding principles and a set of questions that served as a "litmus test" for committees to identify what knowledge, skills and understandings are important for all students. Two guiding principles, consistent with the states listed above, were: 1) All students can learn and 2) All students should have access to the state adopted core curriculum standards. The result of the litmus test questions created a subset of state established goals and objectives that were doable and aligned with what students with moderate/severe disabilities should know. For example, the Colorado team began the identification process by asking these questions:

1. What is the content standard?
2. What are the grade-level benchmarks?
3. What are the key components?
4. What general access skills that may align?
5. What is the application for individual students?

A few states linked identified standards to access skills (CO) or adaptive skill areas/domains (WV) to identify the life skills needed to meet the state established standards and achieve desired life outcomes. Adaptive skill areas cross-referenced with state established goals and standards are referenced in Table 2. As a follow up activity, some states may find it useful to identify instructional strategies to compliment the curriculum through published manuals. Table 3 shows a sample of instructional strategies manuals that have been linked with the adaptive skill areas of the AAMR definition.

Some states decided to use another approach for development. Colorado extended the set of guiding questions to determine specific expanded standards and access skills necessary for an individual student. As a continuation of the instructional planning, the IEP Task Force will use these questions for documenting student performance and necessary learning opportunities and supports on a student's Individualized Education Plan. These questions were:

1. What are the access skills needed for an individual student?

2. What are the student's instructional needs?
3. How will the student demonstrate learning and progress?

The following pages give detailed descriptions of Functional Curriculum committee purposes, representation, and process of development for the states of Colorado, Kentucky, Missouri, New Jersey, New York, and West Virginia.

Next Steps:

Through the efforts to align the curriculum framework to the state-adopted content standards, these states created a subset of the state-adopted content standards to form a common core of learning for all students to achieve. Each state, in the next stage of development, is identifying performance indicators for each of these standards. These performance indicators, evidenced in a wide variety of assessment formats, will become the state alternate assessment.

Table 2

Adaptive Skill Areas Imbedded in the Curriculum Frameworks

	CO	KY	MO	NJ	NY	WV
Communication	x		Not	In	x	x
Self-Care		x	Evident	Draft	x	x
Home Living		x			x	x
Social Skills	x	x			x	x
Community Use	x	x			x	x
Self-Direction		x				x
Health and Safety					x	x
Functional Academics					x	x
Leisure		x			x	x
Work		x			x	x

AAMR 1992 DEFINITION ADAPTIVE SKILL AREAS	Published Instructional Strategies Manuals						
	NCEO	COACH	SYRACUSE	FALVEY	KOKASKA & BROLIN	BENDER & VALLETUTTI (Focus on reading, writing and math skills)	IMPACT (Focus on communication skills)
Communication		Communication	Communication	Communication Skills			Communication
Self-care	Responsibility & Independence Personal & Social Adjustment		Self-Management	Domestic Skills	Caring for personal needs		Self-help
Home living			Home Living	Domestic Skills	Selecting, managing & maintaining a home, Raising children, Buying & preparing food, Buying & caring for clothing	Resident in home	
Social Skills		Socialization	Social Skills	Developing & Fostering Friendships			Social skills
Community Use	Contribution & Citizenship		General Community	Community Skills	Engaging in civic activities, Getting around the community	Participant in community Consumer of goods and services	
Self-Direction		Personal Management		Domestic Skills			
Health & Safety	Physical Health, Personal & Social Adjustment			Community Skills			
Functional Academics	Academic & Functional Adjustment	Applied Academics	Reading/Writing Money Handling	Functional Academic Skills	Managing family finances	Learner in traditional/nontraditional school settings	
Leisure		Leisure/Recreation	Recreation/Leisure	Recreation Skills	Using recreation/leisure	Participant in leisure activities	Recreation & leisure
Work			Vocational	Employment Skills		Employee	
No domain cited	Satisfaction	Time management Motor skills		Motor skills			Transition

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COLORADO

COMMITTEE PURPOSE AND REPRESENTATION:

In Colorado, the Expanded Standards Task Force was charged with defining "parameters for the use/impact of standards for students with the most intense support needs" and creating "a data driven accountability system for students who need an Expanded Standard/Curriculum/Assessment Process (State, District & Classroom)." These parameters were used as the foundation for creating an inclusive accountability system that ensures the inclusion of students with the most significantly diverse learning needs. The 25 member task force represented general and special education building and district administrators, general and special education teachers, advocates, parents of students with disabilities, and State Department of Education.

PROCESS OF DEVELOPMENT:

Committee members developed a set of Guiding Principles, under which the task force operated. The principles for this task force were based on the foundations that:

- ALL students must have the opportunity to access the general curriculum.
- ALL students will participate in general standards and the state assessment process. Individual student needs will drive the decision on how each student will participate.

The committee developed the Expanded Standards as a combination of key components of the State Model Content Standards and related access skills necessary to meet the Standards. The access skills were defined as "underlying skills students need to reach specific indicator for Standards and life outcomes." The access skills may include, but are not limited to: communication, interpersonal, physical, mobility, organization and problem solving. The key components were determined by analyzing prerequisite foundation skills to achieving the Standard and corresponding grade level benchmarks. The task force used a two-step process to determine expanded standards generalized for all students and to determine specific skills for individual students.

Questions used by the task force to determine general expanded standards were:

1. What is the content standard?
2. What are the grade-level benchmarks?
3. What are the key components?
4. What are general access skills that may align?

Questions used by the task force to determine specific standards for individual students were:

5. What is the application for an individual student?
   Process
   Key components
6. What are the access skills needed for an individual student?
7. What are student's instructional needs?
8. How will the student demonstrate learning and progress?
9. Determine next steps

To determine next steps, a matrix process is used to combine access and key components for a student's individualized "expanded" standard and benchmark. The matrix identifies performances with necessary supports to be included on a student's IEP as the way he or she will demonstrate learning toward the Standards and Benchmarks.

KENTUCKY

COMMITTEE PURPOSE AND REPRESENTATION:

In Kentucky, an advisory committee initiated the Alternate Portfolio Assessment in July 1992. The Advisory Committee included general and special education teachers, school administrators, and representatives from Kentucky Institutions of Higher Education. Other projects represented were the Deaf/Blind Project, Advanced Systems, MidSouth Regional Resource Center, and the University of Kentucky Systems Change Project. The charge for this committee was to "determine which standards applied to all students in Kentucky", and these standards formed a subset to be used in the alternate assessment.

PROCESS OF DEVELOPMENT:

As a result of the Kentucky Educational Reform Act of 1990, fifty-four Academic Expectations were identified for all children in Kentucky. The Advisory Committee for Alternate Portfolio Assessment reviewed each of the 54 academic expectations to determine "valued" or "priority" expectations for students with moderate/severe disabilities. The advisory committee premised all work on the following applied guidelines:

- provide students with the skills, knowledge, and confidence necessary to become as independent as possible,
- document student's performance on multiple tasks over time,
- merge instructional and assessment activities, and
- provide information upon which to base ongoing development of instruction that is responsive to students needs.

The committee was divided into three groups, one group representing each grade that is tested. The small groups prioritized each of the academic standards for all students established by the state to determine "valued" or "priority" standards. Valued was defined as "important to learn, but not a priority for students with moderate/severe disabilities." Asking the following questions created prioritization:

1. What do you expect students to do?
2. What do you focus on when looking at students?
3. What can you say about how well the students may complete the task?
4. How does this specific piece of student work fit into a pattern of growth?
5. Was the standard the same for both of the students? Why? Why not?

The participants initially identified 28 academics standards as "priorities" for students with severe disabilities. As the participants made decisions about the standards, examples of critical functions were generated simultaneously. An example of a "priority" academic expectation and a critical function is:

- ACCESSING INFORMATION: Students use research tools to locate sources for information and ideas relevant to a specific need or problem.
  Critical function: Requests assistance

MISSOURI

COMMITTEE PURPOSE AND REPRESENTATION:

The Missouri State Board of Education ruling on Student Assessment requires each LEA to develop a written plan for assessing all students, which creates an inclusive accountability system for Missouri. Each district's plan must meet or exceed the state model. This requirement and the foundation for the alternate assessment (MAP-A) are grounded in the philosophy that the education of every Missouri student is important and there are high expectations for all students.

The Alternate Assessment Committee was comprised of special education teachers from local school districts, parents, local district administrators of special education programs, institutions of higher education and state department of education staff. The committee reviewed the Show Me standards in the six content areas (Mathematics, Communication Arts, Science, Physical Education/Health, Fine Arts, and Social Studies) for appropriateness of use in the development of an alternate assessment. In addition, the committee developed a prototype for the Alternate Assessment to be shared with additional stakeholders at nine regional meetings. The purpose of the nine regional meetings was to obtain additional stakeholder input into the development of the Alternate Assessment process.

Missouri's Show Me Standards include 33 process standards that are grouped under the following 4 goals:

Student will acquire the knowledge and skills to:

1. Gather, analyze and apply information and ideas,
2. Communicate effectively within and beyond the classroom,
3. Recognize and solve problems, and
4. Make decisions and act as responsible members of society, and 40 knowledge standards that are grouped under the six content areas.

PROCESS OF DEVELOPMENT:

After a review and examination of the standards, the committee agreed that the standards would be appropriate for the alternate assessment if they were framed in a functional context. For example;

GOAL 1.	Students in Missouri public schools will acquire the knowledge and skills to gather, analyze and apply information and ideas.
Functional Context:	Students will apply what they learn.
Examples:	generalizes/transfers simple skills in two or more familiar environments, makes simple choices.

Ten areas of performance were identified including: Apply Information, Problem Solve, Communicate, Act Responsible, Communication Arts, Science, Social Studies, Fine Arts, and Health/Physical Education. The committee recommended that an individual student's performance be rated on each of the 4 goal areas and 6 content areas. The committee also recommended that student performance be rated using the 5 assessments. Those 5 levels are Progressing, Nearing, Proficiency, Proficient, and Advanced.

Additional recommendations from the committee's initial work requested that both student performance and system supports be assessed and that a variety of sources of information should be submitted.

The committee will reconvene to learn the reactions of over 500 participants at the 9 regional meetings. At that meeting, a prototype will be recommended for the Alternate Assessment that can be field-tested during the 98-99 school year in several locations.

NEW JERSEY

COMMITTEE PURPOSE AND REPRESENTATION:

The New Jersey Department of Education Alternate Assessment Committee, included department staff from the Office of Special Education and the Office of Assessment, generated a draft guideline for eligibility and a plan of action for the alternate assessment. The eligibility guideline and plan of action were based on the philosophical beliefs that:

- All children can learn;
- All children are full participants in the school experience, and
- All children will participate in the statewide assessment system.

A Core Standards for Students with Severe Disabilities Work Group was convened with representation from regular and special education teachers, the deaf/blind project, higher education, special education, and assessment from the New Jersey Department of Education. The 30-member work group was charged with reviewing the Core Standards and determining how the standards would be incorporated within an alternate assessment.

PROCESS OF DEVELOPMENT:

The Work Group met for three separate sessions. The first was for information dissemination. The work group discussed regular assessment and special education services in New Jersey, the eligibility guidelines, the purpose of the work group. Then the participants reviewed selected Core Standards and options for how the standards might be modified for a student in the alternate assessment. The second meeting continued this activity but with greater focus on the standards for each subject area. The members used the following three questions as the litmus test for each standard:

1. Can this standard be meaningful for students with significant disabilities?
2. Can students with significant disabilities achieve this standard?
3. Can this standard be applied to tasks in everyday living?

Responses were charted as: Yes, No, Maybe and Comments/Rationale. During the third session, those standards with comments or rationales written were reviewed and discussed by the total group. The Work Group then tried to reach consensus on each of the outlying standards. In a culminating task, those standards that could readily be identified by the Work Group as having an overall rating of "Yes", made up a subset of selected standards on which to base the alternate assessment. The next step will be to identify indicators of performance for each standard.

NEW YORK

COMMITTEE PURPOSE AND REPRESENTATION:

An advisory group was established by the State Education Department to examine the *Curriculum Standards* relative to students with severe disabilities. The group was composed of parents, representatives of public and private schools, including special and general education teachers and administrators, Boards of Cooperative Educational Services, the Commissioner's Advisory Panel for Special Education Services, Independent Living Centers, Early Childhood Directions Centers, Special Education Training and Resource Centers, and Department staff. This committee worked under the following principles:

- All students, including students with severe disabilities, must be given the opportunity to achieve the Curriculum Standards, but that not all *Standards* are appropriate for all students with severe disabilities. Additionally, the key ideas, performance indicators, and sample tasks developed on the elementary, intermediate and commencement levels did not necessarily reflect appropriate and/or functional expectations for all students with severe disabilities.
- The Committee on Special Education, with parental input, has a critical role in determining appropriate goals and objectives linked to the standards to ensure standards-based instruction for a student with a severe disability.

PROCESS OF DEVELOPMENT:

A subcommittee of the advisory group developed alternate performance indicators on a basic functional level to reflect appropriate educational outcomes for students with severe disabilities. These alternate performance indicators are linked to the standards in English/Language Arts, Math, Health, Physical Education, Family and Consumerism, Science, Social Studies, Career Development and Occupations and the Studies of the Arts. In addition to these alternate performance indicators, sample tasks associated with each of the alternate performance indicators were developed. Sample tasks clarified expectations for students with severe disabilities and provided guidance for special educators implementing these alternate performance indicators. Sample tasks are intended to provide some examples of tasks that support attainment of the performance standards and demonstrate progress toward achieving the *Standards*. Additionally, the Advisory group developed a definition of a student with a severe disability who would require alternate performance indicators and criteria to assist committees on Special Education in discussions and decision making.

The New York State Education Department will engage in follow-up activities upon endorsement of the Board of Regents.

WEST VIRGINIA

COMMITTEE PURPOSE AND REPRESENTATION:

In West Virginia, the Curriculum Framework Committee began the development of a curriculum framework in Fall 1997. The committee consisted of general and special education teachers, special education directors, parents, and WV Office of Special Education staff who possess the knowledge, skills, and experiences to identify important standards and performance indicators for students with severe disabilities. This committee linked the West Virginia Instructional Goals and Objectives for all students to the ten adaptive skill areas and provided examples of age appropriate real world performance skills for all students who will participate in the alternate assessment.

PHASES OF DEVELOPMENT:

Two phases were implemented when developing the links between the West Virginia Instructional Goals and Objectives and the ten adaptive skill areas/domains for mental impairment (MI) from the American Association for Mental Retardation. The final outcome was to create a functional framework premised on the Foundation Belief that asserts "the alternate assessment must measure individual student's progress in the attainment of functional skills based on the framework of state-adopted Instructional Goals and Objectives."

In fall 1997, the first phase of the process began by identifying alternate performance indicators for students with severe disabilities that reflect "real world" integrated performance skills to assist with planning for long-term adult outcomes. The list of potential performance indicators were categorized according to the ten adaptive skills areas/domains for mental impairments from the American Association on Mental Retardation. The following question was asked to participants to generate alternate performance indicators:

- What do we want our students to learn in the natural setting they need to know it?

An additional outcome of this phase was to identify key components of the Instructional Goals and Objectives for all students that were "doable and aligned with what students with severe disabilities should know." Participants used the following questions to guide the process of identifying key components of the standards:

1. What are the key components of the goal?
2. Are there any components that are "doable" or may align with what we want our students to know? If so, where do they fall on the list of adaptive skills areas/domains?
3. What new ways, other ways, or combination and modifications of old ways may also fulfill at least some of the key components of the goals?

After reviewing the eligibility criteria for student in alternate assessment, the group reviewed the key components to identify logical links to the MI adaptive skill areas/domains. A draft document demonstrating the links between all relevant Instructional Goals and Objectives and the adaptive skills areas/domains was created in

Phase I, along with matrix that identified the adaptive skills links with all instructional objectives. The guiding questions used by the committee were:

1. When deciding which objectives to add or keep, what should our "litmus test" be?
2. What are examples of real world performance skills for the objectives, including a variety of supports, educational levels, and relevant adaptive skill areas?

Lists of examples of real world performance skills were created for each instructional goal in winter 1997. Emphasis was placed on the importance of including a variety of supports, educational levels, and adaptive skill areas when developing examples of real world performance skills.

NEXT STEPS:

The Framework will serve as a draft document throughout the pilot testing. At the end of the pilot year, members of the curriculum framework committee and pilot school representatives may be asked to explore possible ways to improve and clarify the curriculum framework.

Summary and Conclusions

The federal requirements for each state to establish goals for the performance of children with disabilities in the State that are consistent, to the maximum extent appropriate, with other goals and standards for children established by the State have led to extensive development activities. When establishing these goals, States must consider the philosophical foundations that will drive the development of Alternate Assessment and must establish a clear understanding of the purpose of the Curriculum Framework committee. Since the committee's accomplishments are only part of a larger Alternate Assessment picture, it is important to have a strong awareness of the parameters and expectations to guide the Curriculum Framework.

"Ultimate Professional Development"

It is visceral to include a wide array of perspectives from committee representatives who are responsible, in some part, for the long-term success of students who are eligible for alternate assessment. These perspectives bring a sense of completeness to the committee and serve to hold the committee accountable to consider each student's "total life environments."

As a closing activity, participants have been asked, "What personal changes have taken place because of your work on the Curriculum Framework committee?" Although the responses sound different, the meanings are very similar. Expressed changes have include a renewed sense of professional pride, an increased awareness of the vocation, and an increased appreciation for the dedication and commitment to the success all students. One response stated that "this opportunity was the ultimate professional development activity. The tasks required professional dialogue and made us stretch our personal philosophy of educating all students."

Approaches to the Curriculum Links

States have addressed the issue of content standards using two different approaches that focus either on the state adopted, or "general education," curriculum or on basic adaptive skills needed to function in society. This article showcased some states that have selected a subset of the state adopted curriculum goals or standards. These states have chosen to use the state adopted goals or standards as the foundation for creating a curriculum guide for teachers to use in instructional program planning. As stated in the introduction section of the Tennessee Guide, the curriculum framework "contains minimum expectations and shall be the basis for planning and improving instructional programs for every student at the local levels. The sequencing of expectations and performance skills is the responsibility of caregivers and instructional leaders in the district, school and classroom." Other states (e.g. Maryland and Michigan) are developing a "curriculum" that focuses on specific life skills needed to function in society.